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Panel: Post-PhD Research - the Trails and Tribulations of Beginning Post-Doctoral Research Following a PhD

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POST-PHD RESEARCH

The Trails and Tribulations of Beginning Post-Doctoral Research Following a PhD

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Björn Lundell, University of Skövde
Jan Pries-Heje, The IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and the IT University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Frantz Rowe, Université de Nantes, France

In a panel at ECIS 2005 speakers argued that the transition from being a PhD student to being a full member of the IS community is a period of significant difficulty and change for which IS community support is somewhat lacking (with a few notable exceptions such as ICIS junior faculty camp). Within the 2005 panel’s discussion significant emphasis was given the difficulties of establishing a new research direction following the PhD; the topic of this new panel. Here we bring together an panel representing academics from across Europe with a range of experiences. Our aim is to continue to develop a stream of support for new faculty within the European Information Systems field. The panel will consider topics such as:

• When to begin new post-doctoral research: It is crucial to balance the need to write papers from the PhD, with the need to initiate new research. Leaving it too late risks an empty pipeline, too early and the writing slows down.
• The difficulties of gaining funding: Gaining a research grant is always a laborious process with no guarantee of success. We discuss the issues associated with applying for funding, and the problems this presents.
• Joining others or going it alone: Many junior faculty join existing research projects as Post-docs and research officers. This presents its own unique challenges, from recruitment, working with other academics, undertaking joint research, and needing to publish from ones PhD.
• Starting new research before finishing the PhD. While the title of this panel implies a linear sequence from PhD to the next research challenge, many are faced within writing up their PhD while undertaking a different research project (perhaps as a research officer). We will discuss this challenge.

The panel will provide an open and relaxed debate and intends provide a candid, reflexive account of the panel members experiences, so covering this issue from the perspective of both junior and senior faculty. Significant time will be allocated to an open discussion on the issues with the audience, and those attending are invited to raise their own concerns and share their own experiences.
Dr Will Venters (Chair) - (LSE) – Will intends to discuss the pressures of post-doctoral research by contrasting the pressures on a research officer working on a funded project, with the pressures of a new lecturer managing his first large research project. He will discuss the difficulties of gaining funding; the problems of managing staff (and managing managers!); and the problems undertaking research alongside teaching and administrative duties. Will intends to draw on his experience of writing a PhD thesis while working as a Research Officer on a large research project, and his subsequent experience as a lecturer gaining funding for, and organising his own research project.

Dr Luca Giustiniano (University of L’Aquila. Also part time professor at the Luiss Guido Carli University, Rome) – Assistant Professor, PhD in Management Information Systems (2000). Spoiling his personal experience, Luca will discuss issues related to the balance between the need to write the final thesis (also whereas it cannot be presented as a collection of papers but instead has to be conceived as a monographic document, e.g. in Italy) with the exigencies of participating to other research projects running at the institution where the student is affiliated. Issues related to taking part to conferences, doctoral consortia and visiting other research centres abroad will be also covered. Furthermore, he will present a possible path in the tortuous ways of getting a professorship leveraging on the (good!) work made during the PhD program.

Dr Björn Lundell (University of Skövde) I will discuss issues and strategies for initiating and maintaining research collaborations with companies. I will make comment on how to conduct research in large and small industrial contexts. Firstly, I will discuss how to plan, conduct and manage different goals in such contexts. Secondly, I will comment on aspects of relevance and rigour in such research.

Dr Jan Pries-Heje - (The IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Professor at the IT University of Gothenburg, Sweden) – Right after his PhD Jan was tired of Systems Development and focused on high-tech Multi Media development. It was an utter failure! No publications for three years. Jan will tell how he turned away from being technology centred to being development process centred, and how the publications started coming. Jan will also tell about another failure, namely how a major research cooperation with a company led to zero publications. Finally Jan will reflect on his failures. How can it be used to give advice to others?

Professor Frantz Rowe- (Université de Nantes, France). Frantz will discuss the difficulties and needs of research funding, both as a major financial source for the PhD and for post-Doc research; he will particularly focus on the last three topics. Frantz wrote two chapters (on funding and on the Latin model) in the book edited by Jan and David. 18 PhDs have passed their PhDs under his supervision with various sorts of funding; he is currently directing 7. Frantz is the Editor in Chief of *Systèmes d’Information et Management* and the co-chair for ICIS 2008.